

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7070

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

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SUBJECT: TAIWAN POLITICAL REVIEW: OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL REACTION
TO THE SECOND ISSUE

REF: TAIPEI 5369

1. THE SECOND ISSUE OF TAIWAN POLITICAL REVIEW (TPR), NOW ON
SALE AT TAIPEI NEWSSTANDS, COVERS A WIDE VARIETY OF SUBJECTS,
INCLUDING ARTICLES ON "FAIR AND OPEN" ELECTIONS, FREEDOM OF THE
PRESS, PROBLEMS OF FARMERS INCLUDING FARMERS' ASSOCIATIONS,
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, AND THE QUESTION OF ROC GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
ACQUIRING FOREIGN NATIONALITIES. AMONG THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS
ARE KUO YU-HSIN (6753/7183/2450), THE ELDER STATESMAN OF
TAIWANESE OPPOSITION TO THE KMT; INDEPENDENT LEGISLATIVE YUAN (LY)
MEMBER HUANG HSIN-CHIEH (7806/0207/0094), TPR'S PUBLISHER; YANG
CHIN-HAI (2799/6855/3189) A KAOHSIUNG COUNTY BUSINESSMAN ACTIVE
IN LOCAL INDEPENDENT POLITICAL CIRCLES WHOSE ARTICLE APPEARS
UNDER A PENNAME; AND HUANG HUA (7806/5478) A SELF-DESCRIBED
"TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE ELEMENT" COMMUTED BY THE 1975
COMMUTATION ACT AFTER EIGHT YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.

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2. IN A SEPTEMBER 16 VISIT TO KAOHSIUNG, EMBOFF WAS TOLD BY YANG CHIN-HAI THAT COPIES OF TPR ARE NOT BEING SOLD AT LOCAL BOOKSTANDS IN THAT CITY. ACCORDING TO YANG, THE GROC HAS INSTRUCTED MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND SCHOOLS TO ENSURE THAT THE MAGAZINE IS NOT READ BY THE MILITARY OR STUDENTS. YANG ALSO SAID THAT THE KMT HAD HELD MEETINGS AT ALL LEVELS IN KAOHSIUNG INFORMING PARTY MEMBERS THAT THE MAGAZINE SHOULD NOT BE READ AND INSTRUCTING THEM TO "ADVISE" LOCAL BOOKSTALL OWNERS NOT TO SELL THE MAGAZINE.

3. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT JIMMY YANG (YANG HSUAN-TANG 2799/6693/1016), VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EDITOR OF LIEN HO PAO, PLANS TO PUBLISH (PROBABLY WITH STRONG GROC SUPPORT) A NEW MAGAZINE ENTITLED CHINA POLITICAL REVIEW AS A REBUTTAL TO TPR.

4. BASED ON RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH INDEPENDENTS IN BOTH TAINAN AND KAOHSIUNG, IT IS CLEAR THAT TPR IS WIDELY READ AMONG NON-KMT POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AND HAS MET WITH THEIR APPROVAL. ONE TAINAN INDEPENDENT, SU NAN-CHENG (5685/0589/2052) ESTIMATED THAT THE MAGAZINE COULD NOT SURVIVE FOR LONG-- AT MOST A YEARS-- AND EVEN THEN ONLY BECAUSE OF "SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES" (I.E., THE FACT THAT TWO OF TPR'S BOARD MEMBERS -- KANG NING-HSIANG, 1660/1380/4382, AND HUANG HSIN-CHIEH -- ARE LY MEMBERS). BECAUSE HUANG'S LY SEAT IS PERMANENT, HE DOES NOT HAVE TO STAND FOR RE-ELECTION IN THE DECEMBER ELECTIONS. KANG, ON THE OTHER HAND, MUST STAND FOR RE-ELECTION. SU OPINED THAT KANG'S DEFEAT (WHICH BOTH U AND THE EMBASSY BELIEVE UNLIKELY) WOULD BE THE DEATH KNOT FOR TPR.

5. THE EMBASSY'S INITIAL IMPRESSION OF THE SECOND ISSUE OF TPR IS THAT IT MAY BE MORE OFFENSIVE TO THE GROC THAN THE FIRST BECAUSE (A) CRITICISM OF THE GROC APPEARS TO BE DEPARTING FROM THE THEORETICAL LEVEL AND BECOMING MORE SPECIFIC AND (B) BY DRAWING FROM AN ISLAND-WIDE CROSS-SECTION OF INDEPENDENTS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS, IT APPARENTLY IS ATTEMPTING TO BECOME THE VOICE OF INDEPENDENT ELEMENTS. WHILE IT APPEARS THAT THE GROC IS NOW YET WILLING TO USE DIRECT MEASURES TO SUPPRESS THE MAGAZINE, IT SEEMS TO BE TRYING HARD TO SUPPRESS IT BY INDIRECT METHODS. IF THESE METHODS ARE DETERMINED BY THE GROC NOT TO BE SUFFICIENTLY EFFECTIVE IN DAMPENING SUPPORT FOR TPR, THERE

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IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THE GROC COULD DECIDE TO TAKE MORE DIRECT MEASURES AGAINST TPR OR ITS LEADERSHIP.
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